CLAIMS

We Claim:

1. A vehicle sound system, comprising:

a dock adapted to be connected to a music storage device;

an audio head unit adapted to be connected to a set of one or more speakers; and

a removable hard disk drive capable of being removably connected to said dock and said audio head unit.

2. A vehicle sound system according to claim 1, wherein:

said removable hard disk drive stores music data files, said audio head unit plays said music data files.

3. A vehicle sound system according to claim 1, wherein:

said removable hard disk drive stores compressed music data files received from said dock; and

said audio head unit accesses said compressed music data files from said removable hard disk drive in order to play said compressed music data files.

4. A vehicle sound system according to claim 1, wherein:

said audio head unit includes a switch that senses whether said removable hard disk drive is connected to said audio head unit and prevents said audio head unit from operating if said disk drive is not connected to said audio head unit.

5. A vehicle sound system according to claim 1, wherein:

said removable hard disk drive stores music data files and play lists, each play list includes an identification of a set of said music data files, said audio head unit plays said music data files according to said play lists.

6. A vehicle sound system according to claim 1, wherein:

said audio head unit includes a processor; and

said removable hard disk drive stores a replaceable operating system for said processor.

7. A vehicle sound system according to claim 1, further comprising:

a disc changer connected to said audio head unit.

8. A vehicle sound system according to claim 1, wherein:

said audio head unit includes a port for communicating with a disc changer.

9. A vehicle sound system according to claim 8, further comprising:

user replaceable program code, said user replaceable program code programs said audio head unit to engage in two-way communication with said disc changer.

10. A vehicle sound system according to claim 8, wherein:

said audio head unit includes a control panel; and

said control panel includes one or more buttons dedicated to control said disc changer.

11. A vehicle sound system according to claim 8, wherein:

said audio head unit includes a radio tuner; and

a switch, said switch having a first input receiving music from said disc changer, a second input receiving music from said radio tuner and a third input receiving music based on data stored on said removable hard disk drive, and an output communicated to said speakers.

12. A vehicle sound system according to claim 1, wherein:

said music storage device is a computer with a USB port; and

said dock connects to said USB port.

13. A vehicle sound system, comprising:

a port capable of being connected to a disc changer;

one or more speaker outputs;

one or more processor readable storage devices capable of storing user replaceable interface program code and music data files; and

one or more processors in communication with said one or more proceesor readable storage devices, said port and said one or more speaker outputs, at least one of said one or more processors engages in two-way communication with said disc changer based on said replaceable interface program code, at least one of said one or more processors plays said music data files.

14. A vehicle sound system according to claim 13, wherein:

said one or more processor readable storage devices includes a removably connected hard disk drive, said hard disk drive stores said music data files in a compressed format; and

said at least one processor that plays said music data files accesses said music data files from said hard disk drive.

15. A vehicle sound system according to claim 14, further comprising:

a dock connected to a computer, said hard disk drive is capable of being removably connected to said dock, said hard disk drive receives said compressed music data files from said dock.

16. A vehicle sound system according to claim 14, wherein:

said user replaceable interface program code is stored on said hard disk drive.

17. A vehicle sound system according to claim 14, wherein:

said one or more processor readable storage devices include a memory device; and

said one or more processors perform a method comprising the steps of:

determining whether new replaceable interface program code is to be loaded,

reading said new replaceable interface program code from said hard disk drive if said new replaceable interface code is to be loaded, and

storing said new replaceable interface code on said memory device if said new replaceable interface code is to be loaded.

18. A vehicle sound system according to claim 13, further comprising:

a radio tuner; and

a switch, said switch having a first input receiving music from said disc changer, a second input receiving music from said radio tuner and a third input receiving music from based on said music data files, and an output communicated to said speakers.

19. A vehicle sound system according to claim 13, further including:

a control panel, said control panel includes one or more buttons dedicated to control said disc changer.

20. A vehicle sound system, comprising:

a port capable of being connected to a disc changer;

one or more speaker outputs;

a processor readable storage device storing music data files and a set of one or more play lists, each play list includes an identification of a set of said music data files; and

one or more processors in communication with said processor readable storage device, said port and said one or more speaker outputs, at least one of said one or more processors engages in two-way communication with said disc changer,

at least one of said one or more processors plays said music data files according to said play lists.

21. A vehicle sound system according to claim 20, wherein:
each play list includes an order for playing said music data files; and
said one or more processors play said music data according to said order.

22. A vehicle sound system according to claim 20, further comprising:
a control panel in communication with said one or more processors, said control panel includes one or more controls dedicated to operating said disc changer.

23. A vehicle sound system according to claim 22, wherein:
said control panel includes a control to select one of said play lists.

24. A vehicle sound system according to claim 22, wherein:
said control panel includes a control to select one of said play lists or a disc from said disc changer.

25. A vehicle sound system according to claim 20, wherein:
said one or more processor readable storage devices includes a removably connected hard disk drive, said hard disk drive stores said music data files in a compressed format, said hard disk drive stores said play lists.

26. A vehicle sound system according to claim 20, wherein:
said one or more processors can edit said play lists to add songs from said disc changer.

27. A vehicle sound system, comprising:
a control panel;

a port capable of being in communication with a disc changer;

one or more speaker outputs;

a processor readable storage device storing music data; and

one or more processors in communication with said processor readable storage device, said port, said control panel and said one or more speaker outputs, at least one of said one or more processors engages in two-way communication with said disc changer, at least one of said one or more processors plays said music data in response to said control panel.

28. A vehicle sound system according to claim 27, wherein:

said control panel has one or more controls dedicated to operating said disc changer.

29. A vehicle sound system according to claim 27, wherein:

said one or more processors include a first processor for communicating with said disc changer and a second processor for playing music stored on said processor readable storage device.

30. A vehicle sound system according to claim 27, further comprising:

a radio tuner; and

an audio switch having a first input receiving music from said disc changer, a second input receiving music from said radio tuner and a third input receiving music based on said music data, and an output communicated to said speakers.

31. A vehicle sound system according to claim 30, wherein:

said control panel has one or more controls dedicated to operating said disc changer;

said one or more processors include a first processor and a second processor;

said first processor is in communication with said disc changer, said control panel and said audio switch;

said second processor is in communication with said audio switch and plays music stored on said processor readable storage device; and

said processor readable storage device is a removably connected hard disk drive in communication with said second processor and capable of being connected to a computer.

32. A vehicle sound system according to claim 31, wherein:

said music data includes compressed digital data files.

33. A vehicle sound system according to claim 31, wherein:

said music data includes files stored in MP3 format.

34. A method for playing music, comprising the steps of:

receiving and storing first user replaceable music data;

receiving and storing first user replaceable interface program code;

communicating with a first disc changer based on said first user replaceable interface program code; and

playing said music data.

35. A method according to claim 34, further including the steps of:

receiving and storing second user replaceable interface program code after said step of communicating with a first disc changer; and

communicating with a second disc changer based on said second user replaceable interface program code.

36. A method according to claim 35, further including the step of:

decrypting said second user replaceable interface program code.

37. A method according to claim 34, further including the steps of:

receiving and storing second user replaceable interface program code after said step of communicating with a first disc changer;

communicating with said first disc changer based on said second user replaceable interface program code.

38. A method for playing music, comprising the steps of:

receiving a choice between music from a disc changer, a radio and a removable hard disk drive; and

playing music from either said disk changer, said radio or said removable hard disk drive based on said choice.

39. A method according to claim 38, wherein;

said step of playing music includes communicating with said disc changer, when chosen, based on said first user replaceable interface program code.

40. A method according to claim 38, further comprising the steps of:

receiving a selection of a play list and a selection of a track for said hard disk drive if said hard disk drive is chosen.

41. A method according to claim 38, wherein:

said step of receiving a choice includes receiving a selection of a button on a control panel, said button is dedicated to operating said disc changer.